

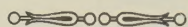
THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy

Vol. XI

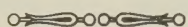
JANUARY, 1934

No. 2



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Kant's Ethics

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CHANGE the names of the thinkers of different periods, give a few nuances to the philosophies for which they stand, and the truth in the assertion that history repeats itself becomes apparent. The Epicureans and the Academicians of the pagan world, forgetting the lessons of Plato and Aristotle, had left to men a sad heritage of lawless thought and lawless morals. Carneades defended with equal readiness and skill both sides of questions of justice before an astonished Roman Senate. Epicureans, whistling bravely though tremulously past the graveyards of mortal men, piped their followers through self indulgence to the sickly pastures of self destruction. Against this display of thought and morals rose up, mighty in its sternly compact though inhuman strength, the philosophy of Stoicism. There is a law above the State's; reason is its rule; passion, if not its enemy, is, at most, its poor relation and must not demand aught in the home where it has no rightful place. It seemed, as Montesquieu says somewhere in his *Grandeur et Decadence des Romains*, that human nature of itself had striven to produce this worthy sect which was like the plants brought forth by the earth in spots never seen by heaven. For the Academicians and Epicureans substitute the names of Descartes, Bayle, Hume, Locke, Diderot, and you have a fair sample of the eighteenth century soil from which sprang another plant of Stoicism. The modern Sensists too have played havoc with thought and life. English Empiricists were resorting to what J. Barrie would call "hanky-panky" in order

to show how universal knowledge was got from sensation. Associationism was their game, and it is about as useful an explanation of knowledge as it is of a jig-saw puzzle to say that it sees itself. French *libertins* were gaily proffering blasphemies which deserved the bolts of heaven, "if heaven had bolts for blasphemy." And Diderot was trying to prove, behind closed doors, that modesty was against nature. From this new soil, "which heaven has never seen," sprang the new Stoicism of Immanuel Kant.

Yet history is never a servile reedition of the past. Though the old Stoicism and the new agreed upon the necessity of the Absolute, yet the new, improving upon the vagueness of the old, placed this Absolute in self. Reason in both gives the law, but not, as of old, by way of recognizing what the law is; reason now creates the law. Further, though neither Stoicism can unite into one the two roads open to man, the primrose path and the strait and narrow way, and though each thus fails to resolve the difficulty that the good for a sensitive-rational being ought to resolve and so fails, when all is said, to satisfy him, yet each strives in its own way to assure men who are anxious to be both good and happy that somehow things will be well with them if they are only good. Old Stoicism assured man that he was an angel. Kant assures him that he is God. What more could a man ask?

As a reaction against Utilitarianism, which gives no moral rule at all, Stoicism is a swing in the right direc-

tion. Pleasure moralists, whether they calculate their pleasures, or distinguish them, or look to the pleasure of others, are always at a loss for some moral standard by which to measure pleasure. To a gourmand a Utilitarian will say, "Indeed, your pleasure is not the best all around, or, at least, it is qualitatively worse than the pleasures of art." But what if the gourmand answers that, all things considered, he likes nothing better than eating and, instead of deep thinking, deep drinking? Utilitarians have no answer in their system to give him. For, to their protest that the gourmand would like art better than gin if he gave art a try, the retort is obvious, "Perhaps, but then you might like gin better than art if you gave it a try. And anyhow, I like good living, and that is the moral principle, isn't it, that what I like is morally good?" Nor can quality-pleasure Utilitarians fare better with a gourmand who sticks to his point. The pleasures of a gourmand are less noble, qualitatively, they will say, than the pleasure of the mind. That may be true, but that does not make mental pleasures more moral, not, that is, unless there be something in intellectual pleasures which makes them morally better, precisely because they are intellectual. And there is nothing of this kind in qualitatively better pleasures. After all, a contented pig is good *qua* pig; whereas it may well be that the pleasures of an angel may be those of a fallen angel. *Corruptio optimi . . .* As for altruistic Utilitarians, they put the cart before the horse; they never can get over the difficulty that another's pleasure, though it may contribute to, condition, or even cause my pleasure, still, is not *my* pleasure; another's pleasure is just a means, that is, *an* end, not *the* end of an individual. Thus the weakness of the utilitarian position is revealed; they have nothing in their system by which to measure the morality of pleasure. Kant, as well as the Stoics, saw this, saw it as clearly, though not as fully, as did the Greeks. Kant saw that morality must be measured by something absolute. If it were not, the formula of the moral quest is simply: Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost—a sort of cut-throat competition of "racketeers," suave and, at times, forbearing "racketeers," but "racketeers" withal. More philosophically, if the good for man is purely subjective—and pleasure is just that and nothing more—then every man is a law unto himself. Kant would, of course, have little difficulty in admitting that a man was a law unto himself in speculative matters, because in these for him there *is* a law; but he would not admit this in practical matters—and he was right. We cannot help *thinking* the way we do, but we can *do* evil. There must be something absolute in morality.

Two roads to the absolute, Kant conceived, lay open to him. On one he was met at the outset by the absolute commands of an absolute authority, a sort of here-George-do-this morality. But why obey authority unless, antecedently to its commands, it be good for man to obey? That way, therefore, the way of absolute commands

emanating from an absolute authority, was blocked. *An impasse.* About face then; seek another path. Pleasure, the relative, the particular, the contingent good, cannot be the way to the absolute. Pleasure is out. The only absolute left is reason itself. The first *Critique*, however, had taught us that reason which pretends to affirm objects transcending experience gives no guarantee of truth. Therefore, that absolute must be not reason in as much as it reflects absolute values and depends by knowledge on external reality but reason in as much as it affirms what it effects (and affirming no more than this reason is above reproach), that is to say, practical reason, the categorical imperative. This is the absolute, an unconditioned command coming from self. Man, its source, is the absolute.

In order to grasp clearly this position of Kant, it may serve to view it from this angle. For Kant duty is the principle of the good, obligation is the source of morality. An act is good, if we ought to do it, not, as we were used to think, the other way about, namely, that we ought to do a thing if it is good. For Kant obligation is the source of goodness. To this notion Kant came, through his principle that the only absolute good is a good will, and by good will he means the will to do one's duty out of a sense of duty. Whether you succeed or not makes no difference; it is the intention that counts, and not just any good intention, but the intention to act solely out of reverence for the law.

It is easy enough to put stiff questions to Kant when he has arrived at this point of his theory. Why, for instance, ought we do anything? If the good is not the principle of obligation, but rather, the other way about, obligation is the principle of the good, what is the principle of obligation? Why ought we do anything? Kant never answered this. Again, what right has Kant to assume that we are drawn either by pleasure, or, as an only alternative, by pure respect for the law? Why may we not be drawn, as we seem to be, by what we like, and what may, at the same time, be good for us, for example, by good mutton, to "fleet the time" with friends, to solve a problem? Granting that in morality intention is what counts, not the external act, why should a good intention have to be the one Kant proposes, namely, to act out of respect for the law? Why might not the goodness of intention lie in *what* is intended? Why should a parent's love for his child have to go against the grain, if it is to be a morally good act? Truly, if Kant's good will is the sole and necessary and exclusive constituent of morally good acts, the will, namely, to act out of reverence for the law, then Kant's sneaking suspicion that no really moral act was ever performed is probably right. Again, if Kant's good will is the only thoroughly good will, why attempt to teach a man who knows no better, the error of his ways? Is there no "way that leads to death" in the Kantian morality? Apparently not. Further, while the system of absolute commands issuing from an external absolute authority, which Kant rightly rejects, was cer-

(Continued on page 30)

THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

Published Quarterly from November to May by the Jesuit
Students of the School of Philosophy and Science of
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI



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"Entered as second-class matter December 1, 1928, at the post office at St. Louis, Mo., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of Oct. 3, 1917, authorized on Jan. 15, 1929."

The Strong Stuff of the Mind

SOME may find it strange that a journal of philosophy should not ignore current events. For them the philosopher is either a dreamer treading the clouds or a professional and disinterested scholar. We must again protest, therefore, against this divorce of philosophy from life, this disunion which is the principle of modern scholarship. For it is precisely the peculiar merit and mark of the philosophy of Aristotle and Aquinas that by it men may not only speculate but, what is more, live. Indeed, we hold it to be the proof of its perennial value that the mental purification of its metaphysic and its ethic prepares man for every sphere of activity.

Hence we are within our province when we point to the recent remarks of the Governor of California on the lynching at San Jose. This incident in which the Governor of a large state betrayed the crudest notions of ethics and his reliance on emotion rather than principle is symptomatic of a widespread and dangerous condition. This condition is not limited to the political sphere; it appears daily in newspapers, in a hundred random articles, in speeches and, above all, in books. It is daily more apparent as new problems are forced on us by the swift turn of events. This radical difficulty which vitiates so much American writing and activity is a pronounced lack of strong, logical thinking and, therefore, of anything like intellectual principles.

This evil to be sure is always present in the human race, but we doubt whether it has often been so apparent

among the intellectual and political leaders of a people. There are, certainly, splendid exceptions, men of sure judgment and sound principles. But the point remains that there is a lack of that strong stuff of the mind; that many of our leaders think and talk and act on impressions, on hazy ideas, on the impulse of the moment.

How has our nation, a nation so devoted to education, come to have so few genuine leaders? There are many other causes, but three particular developments have contributed largely to this condition.

On the one hand we had the demand for universal extension of higher education. The consequent watering down of the humanistic disciplines and the sciences destroyed, in large measure, the power of collegiate training.

On the other hand we had the imposition of an ideal of scholarship that caught hold on the better intelligences and either broke them with disgust and disillusionment at its barrenness and lack of vitality, or stamped them with its image of departmentalized and desiccated learning.

Side by side with these there was also a decay of that philosophical training which should have completed a liberal education or partly supplied for it if lacking. A random glance at university catalogues will indicate what has happened. Philosophy has been largely reduced to history, a mathematical logic and an empirical psychology. Indeed, one great middle western university does not even list a department or a professor of philosophy; the effect is felt in higher quarters, the American Philosophical Association lists in its members precisely three "philosophers." Someone said recently that nowadays every college student works out his own philosophy under the direction of his professor of *psychology*!—and that, for the most part, experimental psychology. What sort of philosophy must the youthful collegian work out for himself on such a basis! And when we consider the years of thought that prepared the Grecian scene for the advent of Aristotle, and the labor and difficulties that have produced every great philosophy, what, indeed, shall we say of our universities if, ignoring our precious heritage, they throw the immature and untrained mind back on the resources of experimental psychology for answers to the larger questions.

Man, because of the appetite of his mind, is a philosopher by nature, but he is a good philosopher only by training. Men are subject to presuppositions, the prejudices and "pseudo-categories" of their own times. "We are all of us," says Hulme, "under the influence of a number of abstract ideas of which we are as a matter of fact unconscious. We do not see them but we see other things *through* them." Men confuse thought and imagination; they are prone to nominalism from birth, like a jovial host they take every chance word, be it advertising slogan or philosophical term, for honest coin.

Hence they must be disciplined into straight thinking, hardened for intellectual effort by a stern philosophy. And there is only one stern philosophy, that can achieve that discipline, only one philosophy that will husband and direct intelligence—the philosophy of Truth.

KANT'S ETHICS (*Cont.*)

tainly arbitrary, the morality of Kant is no less so. The only difference between the two is that Kant has set up a different arbiter, self, an arbiter who gives no more reasons for his commands than did external authority. What is the advantage of changing umpires if one is just as unreasonably dictatorial as the other? Lastly, how can the Kantian good will be an end in itself? Nothing which is perfectible can be such an end, and surely the Kantian good will is perfectible. To act freely is not, necessarily, to act morally. I can be just as free, physically, in obeying passion as in going against it. And if Kant suggests that in obeying passion I am degrading myself, that may be true, but it is true only on the supposition that he has measured my degraded will by some standard other than itself; else why is it degraded? He has measured such a will by an end. Such a measure Kant actually applies, seemingly unaware that he is thus admitting a principle which he thought he had exorcised.

It is easy enough to fling questions like these at Kantian ethics, but there is a better way of effecting a successful criticism.

Utilitarianism is right in seeking the moral principle in the end of man. Unfortunately, though, it is the wrong end that it has pitched upon. Pleasure is not the end of man. Plato could have told Utilitarians that. Indeed Utilitarians themselves implicitly admit the inanity of their position by their efforts to derive moral differences from qualitative differences in pleasures. Qualitative differences in pleasures do not make moral differences. The pleasure of drinking *veuve clicquot* is certainly morally better, though qualitatively less noble, than the morally worse, though qualitatively more noble pleasure of, say, gossip. Yet, for their effort to derive moral distinctions from qualitatively different pleasures, the Utilitarians are to be commended; the effort shows that they feel they must get an end for human action somehow. And as a protest against heteronomous commands coming, God knows whence, and finding no connivance in the one commanded, utilitarian morality will, doubtless, always prevail. It is better to tread the primrose path and be happy about it than to be good (if this were possible) and miserable. Men will not hesitate as to which alternative to choose. In short, Utilitarianism is right in seeking the good for man in what satisfies him, though unfortunately for their system, pleasure does not do this, and that it does not Utilitarians implicitly admit by trying to make pleasure differences moral differences. On the other hand Kant is right in rejecting pleasure as a moral principle; right, too, in seeking the moral principle in something absolute. Only, he is more unfortunate, if possible, than the Utilitarians when he erects his good will into the moral principle. Similarly to the utilitarian method of not letting his right hand know what his left hand doth (the Utilitarians, let us recall, set up pleasure as the good for man, then knock down their own principle by inter-

preting it to mean good pleasure—which they cannot ascertain from pleasure itself), Kant modifies his good will principle by making his good will the end. This is to admit that morality is determined by an end, and, although it be the wrong end for man, still, an end it is. Not even Kant can escape the logic of life. It is ridiculous to talk of a good will as good, simply because it is will. Good will depends on what is willed. Emptied of content, will is emptied of morality. It may not make any great difference, morally, whether or not I accomplish my intentions, but it does make a moral difference whether I will to slit someone's throat, or, out of kindness, to read his poetry. Kant admits this; "Where would we be," he asks, "when it comes to determining the morality of acts, where would we be if this went on?" Precisely. Where an act is to land us, indicates a terminus, a result, an end of action. This is to admit that an end determines action. Parenthetically it might be remarked that to determine morality from consequences is not particularly scientific. But at any rate the surreptitious use of such a method indicates that Kant finds it necessary to discover, somehow, an end.

All this shows that, if each system openly admitted what it surreptitiously borrows from the other, we could get somewhere. If Utilitarianism admitted an absolute end, and Kant an end, the two systems could be fused. To put it in other ways: if what makes a man good could be shown, *en fin de compte*, to be that which satisfies him; if Kant's autonomy could be shown to have in it a dose of heteronomy; if utilitarian autonomy could be shown to be really good for man; if absolute obligation could be shown to be derived from the absolute goodness of what we are obliged to; if autonomy could be shown to be linked with, not divorced from finality; if any of these syntheses could be made (really, they are all aspects of the same synthesis), why then we should have an ethical theory satisfactory to the open and secret demands of every ethical philosophy. It is clear that there are two elements in man to conciliate, the ontologic and the psychologic. Man's being must be perfected, and his feeling satisfied too. The end which satisfied both his being and his feeling must surely be the end of man. We cannot neglect what we are (hedonists do this), nor what we feel (Stoics do this). A theory which professedly neglects neither element ought, for reasons at least *ad hominem*, to win the assent of all, who, though they pretend to surrender one or other element, really hang on to it just the same.

Is there such a theory? Aristotle had it; Aristotle made the syntheses mentioned above, less firmly, less surely, perhaps, than his admirer Thomas Aquinas, but make it he did. Aristotle's foundation is broad and sound, though it was left to the Angelic Doctor to add to it the Gothic spires.

Aristotle's theory was this. Man being intelligent

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A Fundamental in Scholastic Thought

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IN SPITE of William James, who, in his abomination of Absolute Idealism with all its works and pomps, was content to end up his philosophy in a "mere many," and despite Atomic systems and their resolving of reality into an infinity of self-existing atoms, philosophy, whenever it has risen to a full consciousness of its mission, has always been a quest for unity. For we might imagine an animal as such living in a "strung-along" universe, experience being for it just one thing after another. But once reason, as we know it in the human mind, enters into the picture, such lazy contentment with mere multiplicity ceases to be any longer possible. Or if our whole task was to try to imagine how reality might be constituted, without the need of accounting for its constitution, we might be satisfied with the imagery of atoms coming together in a void. But if we have to meet the requirements of an inquiring mind, we cannot long remain in doubt that the atomic presentation is just imagination and not true philosophy at all—not philosophy because the heart has been cut out of it along with the metaphysics. Of course James would have claimed that his system would fit in with any metaphysics, and Democritus, though he did not know it, was debarred with all his kind as mere materialists from any genuine metaphysics. Only indifference to metaphysics or inability to have any metaphysics at all can explain one's resignation to a philosophy of pluralism. For reason, if given scope, will never suffer reality to remain fragmentary for knowledge, and therefore philosophy as metaphysics must always end up in a grasping of the many as one. And thus from Thales, who at the dawn of Greek philosophy showed himself to be of the true brotherhood by seeing all things as coming from water, to Schopenhauer who saw all things as will, the necessity of systematic thought has made the quest for unity the first demand on the philosopher.

The simplest way of finding such unity might seem to be the way of the Eleatics, who reduced all reality to one by relegating the flux and multiplicity of experience to the region of mere appearance. But this is to saw off the branch on which we are sitting, to cut off all access to reality by denying validity to experience. The end of this way of thinking should logically be a distrust of all knowledge, and this is surely too high a price to pay for our unity. We need a system of thought that has room for the many as well as the One—not indeed of the many as independent of the One, for then we should be thrown back into a hopeless multiplicity; but still a many existing in reality as well as for appearance.

Such a system was found, we think, in Scholasticism, though it was not worked out with entire clearness and definiteness until the importance of the concept of analogy

was appreciated. Certainly not in the system of John Scotus Erigena which abounds in formulas that savor of pantheistic thinking, nor completely and explicitly in any subsequent thinker until we come to St. Thomas. Without any intention, then, of identifying Scholasticism with the system of St. Thomas in its details, we make take St. Thomas as our spokesman for the general trend of Scholastic thinking towards a systematic unity.

"God is by His essence the cause of all things, and thus all multiplicity is reduced to a simple principle."¹ This formula of St. Thomas furnishes a key to the fundamental unity of Scholastic thinking. It is by reducing all reality to one simple principle as the source of all, in the sense of efficient, not formal, cause, that Scholastic philosophy finds its unity while preserving at the same time the distinction of God and the universe.

Such a way of thinking is implicit in any Christian view of the universe.² If it had not been clearly grasped in Greek philosophy, this was not for want of a logical demand for it, but because of the inability of the Greek mind in its polytheistic environment to reach an entirely clear idea of God and consequently of the relation of the universe to God.³ And it is because of his own clear concept of God (derived, we know, from Christian revelation) that to St. Thomas the unmoved Mover is one, though Aristotle was prepared to admit as many such movers as there were movements of the spheres. Hence, too, while Aristotle on his part seems to leave God in barren contemplation of His own perfection, for St. Thomas God in knowing His own essence knows all things to which His power, which is no other than His essence, extends, and this intelligence which knows His essence and in it all other things, *secundum quod habet voluntatem conjunctam* is the cause of the existence of all created things—the "many" of our experience.⁴ Or, as the same relationship is expressed in the continuation of the passage cited above from the *De Veritate*:

"But His essence is not the cause of things except in so far as it is known and in consequence except in so far as it is willed to be communicated to creatures by way of assimilation; hence things proceed from the divine essence through the order of knowledge and will."

Thus after the failure of mere speculation the right concept of God as He is in Himself and as He is the source of all that exists comes to Scholastic philosophy as a legacy from Christian revelation for the solution of the problem of the one and the many.⁵

This explanation gets its philosophical setting at the hands of St. Thomas by being framed in the Aristotelian theory of Act and Potency, which has been called the soul of the Scholastic system.⁶ This theory sets up a hierarchy of being in the order: Pure Act—Mixed Act (act and

potency)—Pure Potency. The Act which is Pure Act is the All-Real, and gives actuality to all else that exists. It is prior to all that is potential, for

"The first being must of necessity be in act and in no way in potentiality. For, although in any single thing that passes from potentiality to actuality, the potentiality is prior in time to the actuality; nevertheless, absolutely speaking, actuality is prior to potentiality; for whatever is in potentiality can be reduced into actuality only by some being in actuality."⁷

Thus Scholastic philosophy, at least in the mind of St. Thomas, dissociates itself from all philosophy of process and from the evolutionary idea. It begins with the Perfect, and in so doing it is true, not only to what it owes to Christian revelation, but also to what comes to it from the Aristotelian tradition.⁸

But only the reality of the First Act is underived, independent, full; all other reality is derived, dependent, participated; of itself nothing, and actual only because it is actualized by the First Act. Everything that is, except the First Act, *has* reality; only the First Act *is* reality. This is in substance the concept of the analogy of being, in the possession of which Scholastic philosophy is able to rescue the relations of the one and the many from hopeless confusion and show the possibility of the co-existence of the finite many with the infinite One without addition or subtraction from the fullness of the One.

In the *Proemium* to the fourth book of the *Contra Gentiles* St. Thomas gives us a kind of picture of the relation of the many to the One. He is about to introduce the subject of revelation and is showing the need of such revelation for man, "lest so noble a creature should seem to be set in the universe for no purpose," because of his inability to reach God as his goal on account of the inadequacy of the natural approach to God. Now the natural way of approach to God is this, that, "since all the perfections of creatures descend in order from God, man should begin from the lower creatures and ascend by degrees, and so advance to the knowledge of God." For "the upward and the downward way are one, distinct only in beginning and end." Why the upward way is inadequate he explains, but that does not interest us here. We are concerned rather with the downward way—the descent of creatures from God. Of this descent of perfections there are, he tells us, two processes. One is from the point of view of God as the first origin of things. For to have perfection in creation He produced in order from highest to lowest. The other process is from the side of creatures themselves. Causes are nobler than their effects. Now the first effects and highest products of God's creation do indeed fall infinitely short of the perfection of God, yet they are superior to the effects they themselves produce; and so the process of descent continues down until we come to the lowest of creatures. "And because in that 'roof and crown of all things,' God, we find the most perfect unity, and everything is stronger and more excellent the more thoroughly it is one, it follows that diversity

and variety increase in things, the farther they are removed from Him who is the first principle of all. Therefore the process of derivation of creatures from their first principle may be represented by a sort of pyramid with unity at the apex and the widest multiplicity at the base."⁹ The lines that form the sides of the pyramid indicate the ways of the descent of the creatures from God—the downward way; but also the upward way, for it is along those lines, through the knowledge of creatures from the lowest to the highest, that the natural pathways lie for the intelligent creature, man, to mount by knowledge to the possession of God. And if St. Thomas finds these natural pathways inadequate, it is only because natural things are inadequate to the power of Him who produced them and their reality is only an analogy of the essence of Him who is. And because for the goal of his life "man has been raised, out of all proportion to his nature, to the face to face vision of the divine substance in itself,"¹⁰ natural knowledge must always fall short as a way to this goal. And so philosophy, however perfectly systematized, just because it is only human knowledge can never be a satisfactory guide to the whole of life. For the whole of life for man is not merely human, and to reach his goal man must become more than man.

And so from another angle we see that Scholastic philosophy is the completion and reconciliation of all that went before it. For the central development of philosophy, as St. Thomas admirably outlines it in the *Summa*, i, q. 44, a. 11, was continuous through all the questioning of the Greek mind, that called forth the profound answers of Plato and Aristotle, to the final culmination in the thirteenth century. For in neither Plato nor Aristotle do we find a completed system; but in Scholasticism we have a system at once complete and pregnant with development, capable of expansion. In it reality is mapped out according to the universal principles of Act and Potency, universal because demanded for multiplicity by the nature of *ens in quantum ens*. Thus is reconciled the rich variety of finite beings and the rich unity of the Infinite.

REFERENCES.

- ¹ Aquinas, Thomas, *QQ. Disp. de Veritate*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 4um.
- ² See, for example, the excerpts from the Fathers on "Creation" in Rouet de Journel: *Enchiridion Patristicum*.
- ³ Cf. Gilson: *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale*.
- ⁴ Aquinas, Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, i, q. 14, a. 8.
- ⁵ Ueberweg-Geyer: *Geschichte der Philosophie*, II: *Die Patristische und Scholastische Zeit*, 438: "Die Schöpfungslehre ist der Punkt wo Thomas am entschiedensten die antike Auffassung, und zwar sowohl die aristotelische wie die neuplatonische, durchbricht."
- ⁶ Valensin, A.: *A travers la métaphysique*, 144: "On peut et doit dire que l'âme du système scholastique est la théorie de l'Acte et de la Puissance."
- ⁷ Aquinas, Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, i, q. 3, a. 1.
- ⁸ Cf., for example, *Metaphysics*, 7, 1072b30; N, 5, 1092a8.
- ⁹ The translation is from Rickaby, who translates always understandingly, though at times not literally. Cf., *Of God and His Creatures*, p. 337.
- ¹⁰ Aquinas, Thomas, *Contra Gentiles*, iv, 1.

The Century of Progress an Adventure in Education

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At a crisis in world history that holds the nations in its tenacious grip, these same nations are chanting, perhaps in sheer desperation, a strange medley in which the themes of "depression" and "progress" are weirdly intermingled. "Progress" seems to have gained the upper hand. During the last twelve months especially its shrill refrain has been predominant. In our own country the Century of Progress Exposition, which has recently closed its doors, was largely responsible for the apotheosis of progress."

The Exposition was in fact nothing less than an apotheosis of man's greatness as summed up in the unprecedented display of his scientific, mechanical and industrial achievements of a century. This colossal display was heralded as a "major adventure in nation-wide education." The heralding had indeed begun before the collapse of 1929, but the tune was never changed to the end, though the groans of a whole people furnished a dissonant undertone to the brilliant theme of progress. The exposition halls rang with a new "Gloria," the "glory to man in the highest" of Swinburne. Prudently the refrain of peace to men of good will" was omitted. The fact was too evident that peace and progress had not gone hand in hand; and the very law of progress forbade standing by for a serious inquiry why peace had lagged behind.

The triumph of progress was at the same time the triumph of evolution. The evidence was overwhelming; evolution had worked. It had produced this marvel of marvels. It had given us an incredibly rich and varied accumulation of new ideas, new artifacts, new discoveries, new understanding. The process of the remaking of the world was on exhibit in the vast halls of the World's Fair. Most prominent and interesting, quite naturally, amongst the exhibits was the story of the master-builder himself and of his climb to the pinnacle of the evolutionary ladder. There, arranged in nine stages, from the most ancient Seymouria, a primitive Permian cotylosaur, to modern man, were the rows of skulls, receptacles of the precious, magic brains that make all the difference. As you might expect, there was the intriguing history of the human face from ancient shark to man, manifesting a most convincing gradation. Man's place among the vertebrates was scientifically charted. Modifications of the arm and hand were displayed, and the small model hands of the primates were conclusive evidence if ever there was such. Evolution's final triumphant product was this Man, now on the verge of being hailed as super-man, if for no other reason than this colossal super-exposition which he had organized.

With the Century of Progress Exposition has come a desire on the part of men of science and education to

extend and perpetuate the utility of the fair. The message of the Exposition was to be given a literary form and placed in the hands of the multitudes for easy and continued assimilation. One such effort has resulted in the *Century of Progress Series*. Twenty modest, attractive booklets make up the series. To scan the list of titles alone is like another whirl through the halls and aisles of the Exposition. The "Queen of the Sciences," Mathematics, heads the list, the former Queen being in dishonor in this company of science and material progress. Throughout the twenty volumes the story of evolution is retold in light vein and fascinating word-picture. The lesson is driven home: this is the triumphal march of evolution, and the masses who are subjected to this education stand and gape in open-mouthed amazement.

The *Century of Progress Series* is not alone in the popular field with its mission of instructing the multitudes. There has been a veritable avalanche of publications undertaking to tell the man in the street what he wishes to know about progress and evolution, or perhaps more exactly, what the purveyors of popular science are at pains to have him assimilate. Nor does it all emanate from Chicago or the United States. In England and on the Continent the same zeal for enlightening the layman is manifest. A typical example amongst many is a recent series of radio-talks by prominent men of science and letters, arranged in London under the auspices of the Central Board for Broadcast Adult Education and handled by the British Broadcasting Corporation. The series has appeared in book form under the title *Science in the Changing World*. The fact that Hilaire Belloc appears among the contributors is no guarantee of the sanity of the whole volume. Its orthodoxy may be gathered from the introduction where we are informed how life and finally man may have accidentally originated. "These unstable compounds have been continually reforming themselves out of simpler combinations . . . from generation to generation for more than 900 million years, building up new forms that have branched off from the main stream; but still the main stream persisted until, following what seems like miraculous escapes from an incalculable number of 'accidents', the human mind is produced as a final product." That is a mild forecast of the dogmatic tenor of most of the volume, in which, we are assured, "all explanations must be examined in their evolutionary setting." This fundamental necessity of checking up all results by the evolutionary dogma is stressed by the author: "I stress this point because our newly found ability to look at ourselves and our ideas in this way is, to my mind, one of the most significant changes that have been brought about by the science of the last century. That change is one of the

greatest contributions of science to education. Whether educationists have, in their field, exploited this fact to the fullest possible extent is another matter." The fact is being exploited as never before precisely by the educationists, and the education is furnished to the masses gratis and in large, persistent doses pleasant to the taste.

To return to educational efforts nearer home, let us listen in on Dr. H. H. Newman, Professor of Zoology at the University of Chicago, who furnishes for the *Century of Progress Series* the volume on *Evolution Yesterday and Today*. The book is a penny catechism on evolution. It undertakes to give all the facts on which agreement is general. Controversy and technicalities are not wanted by the average layman and hence are omitted.

There is a first chapter on creation, where the scientist turns exegete and subjects the creation doctrine to a damaging scrutiny. Since the book describes a century of progress we are informed that a century ago men still held to the evidence of tradition, "by some clothed with sacred authority," whereas nowadays "most thoughtful people in this age of science prefer scientific explanation to merely traditional authority; . . . today the great majority of well-informed people accept evolution and consider the creation stories as folklore, or at most merely figurative or allegorical." The special creation of species is not distinguished from the doctrine of a Creator of heaven and earth and all things; so that when at the end of a considerable first chapter Charles Darwin is credited with furnishing at last "an explanation of life that was considered satisfactory enough to take the place of the creation doctrine," the catechumen will have quite forgotten the Creator and the necessity of a creative act at the beginning of things. He will be all the more ready to relieve his mind of such unscientific traditions after he has enjoyed the caricature of Noah's ark and that other weakness of the biblical story, the Garden of Eden.

The usual chapters on the evidences of evolution follow: fossils, structural plans, embryology, blood tests and geographical distribution emphasize the conclusion that evolution has taken place and is still in progress. It is however in the chapter on the evolution of man that, as always, the really damaging education is imparted. An achievement of the last decades is to have put the "truth" of man's essential equality with the brute on a firm basis. "There are now no adequate reasons for doubting that man has evolved with the rest of the animal kingdom." "Man is a typical vertebrate, possessing all the characteristics of the vertebrates." He fits so snugly into his proper place that he is one of the most convenient mammals to classify. It is scarcely more than a truism to state that sound philosophy has always recognized the genuine animality of man. But to insinuate that by mastering this fundamental fact man has come to an unbiased, objective estimate of himself, and had better relinquish any previously cherished unscientific prejudices concerning his unique apartness from the rest of the kingdom into which he so

readily falls, is damaging in the extreme.

We are told that to arrive at a scientific judgment of what man is we could do no better than place ourselves in the position of a visitor from Mars who comes to us for the first time for the purpose of studying life on earth. Man would without hesitation be listed amongst the mammals, and our Martian would manifest surprise that human beings should be slow to recognize this fact. He "would see in the reluctance of men to admit so evident a relationship an interesting problem in psychology." Apparently our visitor would himself be strangely unimpressed by the profound and most obvious differences existing between this upright mammal and his nearest kin of the trees and the forests. He would not find it worth while establishing first of all the abyss that yawns between the builders and organizers of a Century of Progress Exposition and the grunting, grinning denizens of ape-land.

To establish the similarity between man and the apes every shred of evidence is again produced in this popular catechism of *Evolution Yesterday and Today*. It "should be sufficient to dispel the old notion that man is a creature apart." Then once his apartness is not recognized there is a dizzy tendency to depress man to a position of crushing insignificance until he becomes "a lump of matter weighing between 50 and 100 kilograms," or as Mencken once described him: man is a sick fly taking a dizzy ride on the gigantic fly-wheel of the cosmos. Not only does the image of God disappear, but the semi-respectable likeness to the anthropoids is sacrificed to the idol of continuity.

If anything could prove to us the necessity of safeguarding man's intelligence against superficial education and a cheap philosophy, it would be this dethroning of man from his position of uniqueness and nobility as a result of overemphasis on one phase of his nature. Any philosophy that has eyes to see will recognize in man a unique dignity and, by reason of his spiritual soul, a unique purpose; for in this microcosmos the world is summed up, ontologically in his nature, logically in his mind, and so he reaches up spontaneously, through the impulse of his very being, to the Absolute and the Eternal. We cannot help knowing him after this fashion if we envisage him as he appears before us every day, not in the test tube, or the fossil bed, or on the scale that registers his avoirdupois, but as he lives and thinks and organizes and prays before our very eyes in a million ways, and this not only in scientific society but in uncivilized savagery. In proclaiming these facts and making them the principle of conduct man truly glorifies himself while he is singing the praises of God. God's glory and man's exaltation, when based on his true dignity, go together.

The modern mind, from highest scientist to humble man of the street, has long ago learnt to wave aside such out-worn authoritarian philosophy with a gesture of disdain. Science, in the lecture hall, the class room, the magazine, the penny catechism, speaks otherwise. Man is the

highest product of evolution. He is physically a masterpiece. His highly developed brain is his finest possession. He is the builder, the inventor, the scientist. His achievements are on exhibit in a mammoth World's Fair. That is his glory and there is nothing further to say. Yes, there is another word to say: in this philosophy (strange paradox!) the last bitter word is that man is nothing, a bit of worthless scum on an insignificant planet, a sick body. The lament of the Psalmist is verified: "Man when he was in honor did not understand; he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them."

In the last decade there has been much discussion of relativity. It is profoundly changing the scientific outlook on the universe. Physical and mathematical concepts are being recast. Indeterminacy is displacing law in nature. Disconcerting relativity is everywhere. Yet it is relativity that in the end curves back into the universe itself and cannot transcend this material prison, however vast it may be.

Sound philosophy has always proclaimed a relativity so simple that man in every age has spontaneously recognized it: so profound in its influence that it transforms the universe. In this philosophy the startling discoveries of science, the wonders of nature, the stupendous magnitudes of the heavens, and the infinitesimal minuteness of ultimate particles do not stand at the pinnacle of creation. They are not the last word in the marvels of the universe. They are still without their necessary complement. In

fact, considered as absolutes, they have no point to them at all. They are arches without a keystone, cities without inhabitants, organisms without life, words without a meaning. They are all waiting for a voice and that voice is the voice of the rational being. When the Psalmist calls on creatures to praise the Lord, "*laudate Dominum*," he is rather encouraging himself to praise the Lord of creation. But when he exclaims that all creatures do praise their Maker, he is expressing a fact. They are doing so as soon as he utters the word of praise at sight of their mysterious beauty and magnificence. They have found their voice. All the vast expanse of the universe is at work, functioning with admirable precision, when a soul, contemplating the handiwork of the Creator, reverently exclaims: "*Quam admirabile est nomen tuum in universa terra!*"

Such is the significant relativity of this otherwise enigmatic world, this is the crowning explanation that makes it reasonable. When men are systematically untaught this lesson, when a Century of Progress is spread out before them to have them exclaim in amazement "*quam admirabile!*," while they ignore or deny or scorn any higher Name to Whom it is all to be referred, then this mighty creation has lost its meaning, true progress is at an end, chaos threatens to finish the story as it began the same. Can we afford, even with a view to our mere material interest, to indulge in such perverse Century of Progress education?

The Triumph of the Theaetetus

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I

IN THE hierarchy of the forms which give being, goodness, and beauty to this visible universe the primacy is held by the human spirit. It proffers a twofold vindication of this its primacy: first, of all the forms of visible things it is the least immersed in matter, it alone is capable of subsistence independent of the quantum of matter which it informs; secondly, it has, rooted in this very immateriality, the function and faculty of cognition, the power of extending itself to all forms, of apprehending and appropriating them all. "*Formae*," says St. Thomas, "*secundum quod sunt magis immateriales, secundum hoc magis accedunt ad quamdam infinitatem.*"¹ Where there is form, in other words, there is being; and, since the breadth and depth of being is infinite, the immaterial soul which can apprehend and appropriate form and being approaches a certain infinity. St. Thomas expresses this appropriation in the words: "*Cognoscens autem est habere formam rei alterius; nam species cognita in cognoscente . . . propter quod dicit Philosophus 3^a Anima, anima quodammodo omnia.*"²

This second vindication of the primacy is intellection, knowledge, logical truth. *Anima quodammodo omnia.*

The soul knows all things according to the mode in which it is all things, and it must be all things by a certain similitude, for, according to a very ancient principle of Greek philosophy, knowledge is only of similars. But all created things are products of a supreme intelligent principle, reifications of divine exemplars, created participations of an essence which is Pure Form, Pure Spirit, Purest Act. Consequently, in all material things there is a perspicuous principle of intelligibility, the form. Accordingly the human spirit, since it is itself a form and a principle of intelligibility, has a primordial affinity and similitude to all other forms; and, as a principle of intelligence, relying on this similitude and its own comparative independence of matter, it can apprehend and appropriate all other forms. Indeed, the truth of the mind, or knowledge, is said to be nothing but an intentional similitude, an adequation, an assimilation of the mind to its object.

Truth, therefore, is twofold, for truth and being are convertible; and we have seen that being is ontological and intentional, or, physical and logical. Ontological truth is the form, the act, the being of a thing so far as it bears a relation to a knowing mind; but it is in the

object itself. The measure of ontological truth is the divine essence. Logical truth is the adequation, or correspondence, or assimilation of the mind to its object. The measure of logical truth is the very knowability of the object cognized, the objective evidence, the perspicuity of the thing which (like *potentia activa*) *non dividitur contra actum sed fundatur in eo*.³ Objective evidence, then, or the *perspicuitas rei* is the criterion of logical truth and the ultimate motive of all certitude.

So much for the present of what has been called the Thomistic *Erkenntnistheorie*, let us turn to Plato. For Plato, evidently, the ultimate measure of ontological truth is not the divine essence; the measure is rather multifold, namely, the Ideas; for it is in virtue of their participation in these that things have their nature. The perspicuousness of phenomenal things is for Plato a resultant of the soul's prenatal vision of the Ideas and the object's participation in the Ideas. For Plato, therefore, the ultimate measure or criterion of logical truth should not be had without reference to the Ideas. It has been said by a distinguished Platonic scholar that the problem of the *Theaetetus* is the nature of the mental affection called knowledge and the manner in which it arises.⁴ In our terminology, then, it is in part an epistemological and in part a psychological problem. In the present paper the *Theaetetus* is considered on its epistemological side. The thesis of the paper may be briefly stated: that the dialogue, whatever it may do for a specifically Platonic theory of knowledge, paves the way to the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of knowledge, and that, *in specie*, it clears the ground for the above indicated Platonic as well as for the Scholastic measure of knowledge, criterion of logical truth, and ultimate motive of certitude. We are mainly concerned with the first section of the dialogue, against Protagoras, or rather, against the whole relativistic side of Greek philosophy and the theory that sensation is knowledge. When Socrates' refutation of Theaetetus' first definition of knowledge has been shown to be in logical exigency of a criterion of truth, it will be less difficult to point out the helpfulness of such a criterion to the refutations of the second and third definitions. The largeness of the subject is patent excuse for brevity and for the avoiding, so far as possible, the use of eruditional apparatus.

The *Theaetetus*, although rather long, may be outlined simply. Socrates in conversation with Theaetetus, a brilliant, charming lad, asks him for a definition of knowledge or understanding. The clearing away of the quibble involved in "understanding cobbling" introduces at the same time an expatiation on the Socratic method. Theaetetus must needs be assisted in analyzing his concept, and Socrates, whose art is maieutic, will determine its worth. Theaetetus essays that sensation, internal and external, actual and revived is knowledge.⁵ Socrates immediately identifies this with the Protagorean criterion, "Man is the measure of all things," and with the Heraclitean universal flux. It is at length rejected—how

fairly we are to see presently. Theaetetus then suggests that true opinion is knowledge. Socrates, after some discussion of the still very knotty problem of false judgments, rejects this second "wind-egg." A third definition, a sort of emendation of the second, is offered: that knowledge is true opinion combined with definition. This, which is evidently a step in the right direction, has been called, "for practical purposes, substantially Plato's own view."⁶ But Plato virtually reduces it to the second and rejects it likewise. Thus all the boy's valiant essays have produced only "wind-eggs," and we seem to have been idly detained by futile logomachies.

"But if, Theaetetus," Socrates concludes before making his way to the *archon basileus* to meet the indictment of Meletus, "you should ever conceive afresh, you will be all the better for the present investigation, and if not, you will be soberer and humbler and gentler to other men, and you will be too modest to fancy that you know what you do not know."⁷ This is the only indication of the beautiful ethical expressions which appear so frequently even in the midst of "the barren logomachies of the *Theaetetus*" which can be given in so brief an outline. But the presence of these indications of Plato's strong ethical bias gives richness to the dialogue even for those to whom Platonism is purely an inspiration to spiritual-mindedness, a guide to fair thoughts, and who would heartily agree with these words of Paul Shorey: "The contents of dogmatic Platonism may almost be summed up in the single sentence *os chre philosophhein kai aretes epimeleisthai*."⁸

II

The wise, according to Socrates, are wise by wisdom, and wisdom arises from knowledge. "Herein," he adds, opening the dialogue proper, "lies the difficulty which I can never solve to my satisfaction—What is knowledge? Can we answer that question?" (145e Jowett). The first answer of Theaetetus serves the purpose of clearing away a quibble and of leading to the abstraction necessary for analysis of the concept. No one denies that knowledge somehow means the contents of consciousness; hence, when Theaetetus answers that knowledge is geometry and the other arts and sciences, Socrates immediately discovers that for Theaetetus "understanding cobbling" and "understanding carpentry" are so confused that carpentry and cobbling constitute "understanding." "The material object of each of these understandings—you're defining that, aren't you? But we desire to define 'understanding' as it is in itself." (146e). Socrates gently explains to Theaetetus the desire for a definition of *knowledge* in the abstract, and the way is cleared for the exacting search.

Before it proceeds we are given an introduction to the Socratic maieutic. Socrates attends men and not women and looks after their souls when they are in labor, and not after their bodies. "But as its greatest value my art has this—that it is able thoroughly to examine whether that of which the reason of the young man is delivered is an idol and falsehood or a real offspring and true."

150b-c) Socrates, the pedagogue, therefore, is able to measure the truth or falsity of the mind-child. But how? After assuring us that his art is a divine commission and one which he exercises with fortitude, he says that he can pamper no one with his decisions. "It would be wrong for me to admit falsehood, or to stifle the truth." (151d, Jowett) Again we ask what measure or criterion of truth Socrates employs in this practice of his art. For the present let this long speech on maieutic serve only to show us that Plato certainly undertook the definition of knowledge in a spirit of deep seriousness.

There is, however, a second importance in the presence of this expatiation on the Socratic method at this point in the dialogue. This importance is its bearing on *anamnesis*, the reminiscence of the Ideas. At this point in the *Theaetetus*, as elsewhere in this and other dialogues, Socrates insists that the wisdom of the pupil is the pupil's own. It is, of course, a "reminiscent" wisdom; and we understand this from Socrates' explanation of his maieutic art without explicit affirmation of the doctrine of reminiscence. But it is preferable not to make too much of this comparison or allegory.⁹ At any rate, when the comparison is concluded, Theaetetus is exhorted, not without a touch of religious fervor, to refine knowledge anew. "Once again and from the beginning, Theaetetus, what is knowledge, endeavor to express it; and that you are unable, do not so much as suggest, for if God wills it and gives you manly courage, you will be able." (151d)

"Well, then, Socrates, in response to that exhortation of yours it would be disgraceful for anyone not to be quite eager to express his mind. Now it seems to me that he who knows senses what he knows, and, as it now appears, knowledge is nothing but sensation." (151d-e)

This is a courageous start and a worth while one; worth while, because more questions than one must be discussed before the definition is rejected. Knowledge is *aisthesis*, and our interpretation of *aisthesis* has been given above; knowledge is sensation, external and internal, actual and revived. Theaetetus, then, in his first definition admits an intentional similitude between us and the objects of our knowledge *solely because we sense them, and only in so far as they appear to sense*. For by "sensations" we understand "those conscious processes which are the immediate results of objects affecting our sense-organs and by which we become aware of the sensible qualities of these very objects."¹⁰ In the case of actual sensations we get the object as it appears here and now. Revived sensations are conscious states by which we become aware of the object *as it appeared there and then*. External sensations are those by which we become aware of the sensible qualities of other bodies; organic or internal sensations make us aware of our own bodies. All this may seem a bit advanced for a schoolboy in an Athenian palaestra. And it is; for there are points in our description of sensations which anticipate the refuta-

tion of Theaetetus' definition of knowledge. Nevertheless our description of sensations summarizes fairly well the expanded meaning which Socrates early in the dialogue gives to the term *aisthesis*.¹¹

Now the sensible world—to choose a mild and optimistic figure—is a universal pageantry whose scenes and harmonies succeed one another with bewildering rapidity. Moreover, we must remember that no two men see it with the same eyes nor hear it with the same ears. Such considerations (as we shall see immediately) led Plato to identify Theaetetus' first definition of knowledge with the dicta of Protagoras and Heraclitus. For if things *are* as they *appear*, then "as things are sensed by one, so they are for one;" (152c) and, since they are sensed one way by one man and another by another, each is unto himself their measure, and "man" becomes "the measure of all things" (the relativistic Protagorean epistemology). The plumage of a mendicant dove is of one color as it picks up a bit of grain and of another color as it raises its head again. For appearance it is not now what it was a moment since; things, however, are as they *appear*, as they are sensed; man is the measure and since to sensing man all things are flux, we logically conclude that *ontos panta rei* (the Heraclitean ontology of flux).

Plato makes the identification of these three doctrines in two steps. The first step is practically an identification of the first two statements. Sensation is knowledge because man is the measure of all things; and man is the measure of all things because sensation is knowledge. As Plato puts it in the *Cratylus* (cited by Campbell), "But would you say, Hermogenes, that the things differ as the names differ? and are they relative to individuals, as Protagoras tells us? For he says that for all things the measure is man, and that as things appear to you so they are to you. Do you agree with him, or would you say that things have a permanent essence of their own?" (386a, Jowett with alterations) We must notice that Plato says (for Protagoras), "as things appear, so they are," and not, "things are as they appear." The difference is between a relativistic and a subjectivistic interpretation. Protagoras is not an idealist. As Taylor says: "Protagoras denies that there is a *common* real world which can be known by two percipients. Reality itself is individual in the sense that I live in a private world known only to me, you in another private world known only to you."¹²

The identification of the first two doctrines is completed in the clever and explicit sentence, "Sensation, then, is always of being, and infallible, for it is (so *you* say) knowledge." (152c, following Campbell) The word that is of greatest importance here is *Touontos*. By his explicit use of it Plato keeps to his epistemological problem and his search for truth and knowledge of permanent essences. This is our reason for avoiding the use of "percipient" and "perception." For the Scholastic does not meet Protagoras with a simple denial. Experimental psychology leans rather to the opinion that the sensed

world, taken precisely as such, is *not* common to any two sense-percipients. Sensation and sensible knowledge are, after all, bound up very intimately with matter. And if matter is at the root of individuality we should not be surprised to discover that in these matter-bound faculties "individual differences" are quite noticeable. Without further discussion let us say that the sense-faculties if sound give sense-knowledge infallibly. We concede to Protagoras that sensation is always *Tou aisthetou*, and as such infallible, for it is the sense-perception and sense-knowledge *Tou aisthetou*. It is of course not the only knowledge; above all it is not *episteme tou ontos*.

The second step in Plato's identification of the three doctrines is to show that, if man is the measure of all things, all things are in flux. The ontology of flux is the basis of the epistemology of relativism; Campbell puts it: "The saying of Theaetetus is shown to be the meeting point of two lines of speculation . . . the one regarding all knowledge as relative and apparent to man; the other regarding things without reference to man as in a state of transience or relation; thus sense cannot be knowledge, unless knowledge is relative and being is change." We referred above to the explicit and clever sentence in which sensation is said to be *of being*; in his next words Socrates introduces the "flowing" philosophy. "Why then, was he not most brilliant, your Protagoras? for he made a riddle of this thing to us, the vulgar crowd, but privately to his disciples he told the real truth." (152c) He then proceeds to expound the philosophy of flux. Campbell's comment at this point is all that is of importance to us in regard to the historical points. "Whoever," he writes, "the contemporaries were to whom Plato refers as the disciples of Protagoras, he aims beyond them at the whole relative side of Greek thought, of which Heraclitus was the most prominent exponent."¹³

"I am about to speak of a high argument," says Socrates, "in which all things are said to be relative; you cannot rightly call anything by any name, such as great or small, heavy or light, for the great will be small and the heavy light—there is not a single thing or quality, but out of motion and change and admixture all things are becoming relatively to one another, which 'becoming' is by us incorrectly called being, but is really becoming, for nothing ever is, but all things are becoming. Summon all philosophers—Protagoras, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and the rest of them, one after another, and with the exception of Parmenides they will agree with you in this. Summon the great masters of either kind of poetry—Epicharmus, the prince of Comedy, and Homer of Tragedy; when the latter sings of

'Ocean whence sprang the gods, and mother Tethys,'

does he not mean that all things are the offspring of flux and motion?" (152 d-e, Jowett)

Socrates now states the "puzzle" left unsolved by common sense: six dice are more than four, and less than twelve; Socrates is taller than the growing Theaetetus this

year and will be shorter next year. How can such things be? "The Protagorean solution of this puzzle," writes Professor Shorey, "is going to be that there is no thing, or that every changing relation makes it a new thing."¹⁴ For us they are indeed changing relations but for the "flowing philosophers" things themselves are nought but constant change. We can hardly blame Theaetetus when he frankly admits that his head is swimming. It has all been just a bit involved for an opening lecture in philosophy.

Socrates gives his Heraclitean theory of sensation. Things are only eddies in the upward and downward flux. We are ourselves constantly changing, but at times there are moments of contact in the constant change and we have sensations. We have seen Plato's identification of these three important expressions of relativism. We have now to consider his answers, and considering them attempt to demonstrate their exigency for a criterion of truth, such as, for instance, our own. That the answers of Plato are tentative and preparatory was indicated long since by Professor Shorey, when writing of the *Sophist* and *Theaetetus* he says: "In order to express the heart and mind of Plato, then, as revealed in these writings, we must say, not that he undertook to reconcile Being and Becoming which means just nothing, but that he endeavored to cut a clear path for logic through the maze of quibbles that the Sophists and clever young Athenians had created by playing with the catchwords of current philosophies."¹⁵

[This essay will be continued in *The Modern Schoolman* for March.]

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- ⁴ Shorey, Paul, *What Plato Said*, The University of Chicago Press, 1933, p. 572.
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- ⁶ Shorey, *op. cit.*, p. 285.
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- ⁹ *Id.*, *What Plato Said*, p. 271. (Cf. p. 7, 145e, Jowett).
- ¹⁰ Gruender, Hubert, *Experimental Psychology*, Bruce, Milwaukee, 1932, p. 13.
- ¹¹ This summary of Socrates' meaning is perhaps more dogmatic than the actual text warrants; but the reader is referred *pro* to Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 32 and *con* to Taylor, A. E., *Plato, The Man and His Work*, 3rd ed. Lincoln MacVeagh, New York, 1929, p. 325, n. 3. Cf. also Shorey, *What Plato Said*, p. 573.
- ¹² Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
- ¹³ Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- ¹⁴ *What Plato Said*, p. 271.
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Mr. Demos on Non-Being

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THE *Journal of Philosophy* for February 16, 1933, contained a thought-compelling article by Mr. Raphael Demos of Harvard, entitled "Non-Being." The article has depth; it goes to the point of several vital questions in logic and metaphysics, and raises a number of issues which are well worthy of consideration. Hence I deal with some capital points of the article in this study.

What has Mr. Demos to say about "nothing"? He begins with the popular idea that "nothing" is merely the conceptual reverse of "something" positive. But this excludes non-being from reality; and if non-being is so excluded, then plurality and change are also excluded; but this is impossible. Hence, "non-being must be admitted together with being as a necessary constituent in the world of reason and of experience. . . . Our problem is metaphysical, not logical." Non-being is not mere "otherness"—the presence of something positive; it is not "a projection into the real world of the subjective attitude of denial;" it is "a negative fact." Negation is the point of departure for the intellect; it is so because "positive and negative characters are . . . correlative poles in every fact. A thing is what it is through whatever it is not; and it is not through whatever it is."

Mr. Demos then illustrates his point by a few remarks on the constitution of being. Being, whether "particulars, classes, essences, or facts," is constituted by inclusion and exclusion: being and non-being. "The structure of the individual—as constituted by the facts about him—can best be expressed by the figure of a circle; there is so much inside and the rest is outside." "Actuality comes about through separation, through sharpness of outline, through the establishment of compartments." "Actuality is achieved through limitation. . . . We have two kinds of limitation . . . external, which is mere exclusion through what I have called the principle of fatigue; the other . . . internal, in the sense that the achievement of value requires the exclusion of a definite range of forms."

The actuality of the individual is achieved through its possession of diverse forms; "an entity is a fusion of forms or essences, without a substantial principle in which these forms inhere." "The totality of essences is capable of being expressed by a unified formula, which is the nature of the entity in question . . ." Then, "given any actuality, we have both the being of togetherness of forms, and the non-being of such togetherness; the former is as essential as the latter."

We have, then, non-being in three guises: otherness, contrast, and non-being; and when we analyze the constitution of being, then we must admit that "actuality is being with non-being, but non-being is a form of being. Indeed, the whole concrete entity, defined as being with non-being, is itself a being. . . . Non-being turns into

being, which is itself contrasted with more non-being, and so forth."

I fear that this is an extremely inadequate sketch of Mr. Demos' forceful exposition; nevertheless, the general current of his thought is perceptible. He says that his problem is metaphysical, not logical. It seems that he has confused the logical and metaphysical issues of the question, and if we are to discuss the point, we must first of all distinguish between the constitution of the individual, which is a metaphysical question; and the content of the intellectual act of the judgment, which is a logical question. Reality must not be confused with the way in which the mind expresses reality.

We agree with Mr. Demos that there must be some real principle which entitles us to speak of "non-being" and "nothing." Must we then admit "non-being" as a metaphysical principle and place it on a parity with being? Before we thus tip over the principle of contradiction, let us see whether there is another explanation. The Scholastic system offers one in its treatise on the limitation of being. That treatise may be reviewed here as extremely pertinent.¹

It is a datum of experience that limited beings exist. Man is not God, body is not soul, a dog is not a horse, John is not James, and so forth. Furthermore, there is a constant vacillation of limits; one substance passes into another, or, remaining the same, is subject to a constant succession of modifications. The human body, for example, is an ever-burning flame of anabolism and katabolism; the human intellect is a kaleidoscope of thoughts. Hence reality, whether viewed as static or dynamic, presents under the one aspect a view of limitation, under the other a view of change; in Mr. Demos' words, a composition of what is and what is not. A double principle must be sought; this we both admit.

But here Scholastics part company with Mr. Demos. There is a principle of actuality or unity, and a principle of diversity; but the principle of diversity is not *non-being as such*; both are positive principles, and the union of these two positive principles constitutes the concrete being. Mr. Demos would call one principle being, and the other non-being; the Scholastic would call neither principle being or non-being, but would insist that united they are the concrete being.

What then are these principles? It makes no difference what you call them; Aristotle speaks of *entelechy* and *dynamis*, the Scholastics of *act* and *potency*. Act is the principle of determined perfection; potency the principle of limitation. Note, potency is a positive principle; for it is the determinable of which act is the determinant, and a mere nothing is incapable of determination.

Is this mere dogmatizing? No; if the principle of

contradiction means anything, we should not disregard it in our philosophizing. The application of the Scholastic notion to the constitution of the individual will show how that notion accords with experience and reason. The Scholastic holds that the finite individual is a complete substance, existing in itself; it is not a pure existential act, which pertains to the Supreme Being alone, because the act of individual existence is ordained to a certain determined mode of being, which he terms its essence; and this determined mode is the product of form (the principle of specific perfection) united to a principle of pure determinability—prime matter—which is the ultimate root of the multiplicity and limitation of the material universe. Matter, the Scholastic teaches, is the "principle of individuation;" for matter, being of itself a mere determinable, the principle of passivity and of quantification, bespeaks a composition, and therefore a limitation, in the individual substance.

"La théorie de la puissance et de l'acte se répète dans les différentes compositions de l'être de façon variée, proportionnelle, analogique. La puissance est toujours principe de déterminabilité, et, en recevant l'acte qui la détermine, elle le limite et l'individualise . . . L'esse substantiel est, dans son ordre, acte ultime répondant à une essence qui est telle, à une essence déterminée." ²

Let us illustrate by example. John Smith is an individual human being. As an "animal" he possesses a material principle—his body; as a "rational" animal he possesses a spiritual principle—his soul—which is a determined perfection, because it is ordained to a substantial union with this particular body. This individual human essence of John Smith, then, constitutes a determined mode of being, according to which mode the act of existence is limited. It is not to the point here to give in detail the Scholastic proofs for this explanation; Mr. Demos himself admits that a double principle must be sought; and I wish only to show that the Scholastic synthesis, whether certain or merely probable, does offer an explanation.

This, however, is not the complete explanation of the individual. John Smith is not humanity as such; his humanity is further determined by a number of qualities which afford us a means of distinguishing him from James Jones. I say they afford us a means of distinction; for the Scholastic holds that these do not effect the substantial distinction between two individuals of the same species. Mr. Demos would say that it is the unity of these forms—his "Smithness," his "tallness," his "color," etc.,—which constitutes John Smith; not any one taken alone, but "togetherness of forms." Here the Scholastic makes a sharp distinction; the substantial compound outlined above constitutes an individual substantial principle of perfection—call it "Smithness," if you like—which is further determinable by accidental perfections—"tallness," "color," and so on. What ultimately constitutes John Smith is the *substantial act of existence proper* to John Smith, which is ordained to the determined individual essence of John Smith. Mr. Demos says that "the assumption of the reality of an individual apart from essences

(or the truths about him) is quite an assumption." The Scholastic holds that the existence of such an individual substance is the logical issue of the double principle of actuality and potentiality. "Smithness" is not on a par with the qualities of John Smith; he is always John Smith, while his qualities change. Hence they are termed *accidental*. Unless a distinction is made between "Smithness" and qualities, then the very identity of the individual is a mere accidental quality. The very notion of quality postulates a *qualified subject*. If specific unity means anything at all, it means a single determining principle in the order of substance. Smith and Jones are both men and both tall; but they possess their humanity and their tallness in totally different ways.

These accidental determinations, then, are the ultimate limitations of specifically unified individuals. They do not constitute the nature; they proceed from it. With this explanation given, we can see the Scholastic counterpart of Mr. Demos' being and non-being. Non-being is simply nothing; every creature that exists is something, but a *finite* something. If it is finite, indeed, then there is something that it is not; but this external relation is not a positive determination of its being. The being is limited because of positive internal principles which determine it; because it is so determined, it is specified, individuated, qualified; because it is so specified, individuated, qualified, because it is a limited something, then everything apart from that something can *not* be predicated of it. Only in a world of Parmenidean unity would there be no negation; finitude and multiplicity mean limitation, and limitation brings *not* into our vocabulary. Let us repeat our distinction between the metaphysics and the logic of the question; here we are looking at the being itself, and we see that whatever exists must exist as something positive.³

What, then, of the "negative fact"? We are given limited beings; these beings are limited not externally because of what they are not, but internally because of positive principles determining what they are; yet is it not a "negative fact" that John is not James? Is not this a "nothing" which is something? No; all that is present in the ontological order is the limited individual. But limitation and multiplicity mean a real relation between the objects multiplied; and this relation, apprehended by the intellect, is the ontological foundation of the "negative fact." It is not a mere nothing; when we say that John is *not* this or that, we express John's positive determination in relation to the positive determination of other beings.

So far, then, for the metaphysics of non-being; to complete our explanation of negation we must discuss the nature of the intellectual act of the judgment—the *intellectus componens et dividens*. The judgment has two terms, subject and predicate, both of which are positive concepts. We may say with M. de Tonquédec⁴ that the judgment, in contradistinction to the simple apprehension, has two essential characteristics: it is a complex act, and

it is an act of assent. It is a complex act in so far as the concepts of subject and predicate are synthesized in the comparative apprehension as the material to be submitted to the judgment; it is an act of assent in so far as the very judgment itself affirms or denies—that is, it unites subject to predicate, or separates them.

"Dans la simple appréhension, le sujet est saisi avec sa forme, *per modum unius*: c'est 'ce vert,' ou 'la figure aux trois côtés,' ou 'l'animal raisonnable.' Puis le jugement a lieu; alors cette unité synthétique se brise, l'esprit met d'un côté le sujet, de l'autre la forme, il exprime chacun de ces termes dans un concept spécial; et s'il refait avec eux, à sa manière, une synthèse, celle-ci laisse bien apparente leur diversité, puisqu'elle consiste précisément, à affirmer leur convenance, à attribuer la forme au sujet."⁵

Let us take the judgment, "John is not red-haired." Mr. Demos would say that the subject is "John," and the predicate "*not red-haired*;" non-red-hairedness would be a negative pole determining John. The Scholastic says that "John" is the subject, and "*red-haired*" the predicate; *not* is the act of the *intellectus dividens*; negation is division.

Mr. Demos is upon us at once; this is "the subjectivist view of negation; according to this, negation is only a projection into the real world of the subjective attitude of denial. . . . The subjectivist theory fails to eliminate the negative element from the objective situation. On what ground is the denial of a proposition valid other than that the proposition is inconsistent with fact? And is not the relation of inconsistency a negative fact?" Mr. Demos at this point confuses the mode of conceiving with the mode of expressing, and both with objective reality. There is nothing in reality except John. My concepts of subject and predicate are formed by the simple apprehension. The mind then juxtaposes subject and predicate in the comparative apprehension. Now my concept of John, who, let us say, has black hair, is gained from experience; and this concept contains in itself the note of John's black locks. Obviously, with this positive fact given in the subject, the predicate cannot be united thereto. Hence I deny—that is, I divide; I remove from the subject a note which is excluded by the positive determination of the subject, and in this act my knowledge is perfected, since I recognize my possession of the truth as such. We do not say that the intellect is always conscious of these processes, any more than in sense perception we are conscious of the retinal image in vision; we simply form a judgment.

Let us take Mr. Demos' proposition, "Mr. Smith is not in the room," which might seem to offer some difficulties. Mr. Demos says his justification for the proposition is the fact that "nobody else is in the room but Mrs. and Miss Smith," which is a "negative fact." The difficulty, however, is merely verbal. The proposition would be just as true if stated, "The room does not contain Mr. Smith;" and my justification for the judgment is my apprehension of the positive determination of the room, even if it is empty. For its emptiness is my own way of saying that what I am looking for is not there; that is, it expresses

the relation of one positive entity to another. Would Mr. Demos have us conclude that the ontological determination of the room is changed because of my subjective attitude of expectancy?

We have, then, run the "negative fact" down to its ultimate hiding place when we affirm that composition and division are acts peculiar and essential to the judgment. Note well that we do not deny the validity of the judgment as a representation of reality; but we do insist that it represents reality in its own peculiar way; beyond the mere representation of the simple apprehension it adds something of its own—the union or division of concepts;

"La contradiction prise formellement comme telle, résulte de la négation de ce qui a été posé et la négation est une pure fonction logique; dès lors, la contradiction aussi appartient exclusivement à l'ordre logique et ne peut se trouver, comme telle, dans l'ordre réel . . . une contradiction dans le réel n'a aucun sens."⁶

The negative fact, though ultimately the act of the *intellectus dividens*, is not merely subjective, since it is based on the data of our concepts. It attains objective truth either by analysis, in which the unity or diversity of subject and predicate is evident from the nature of the object conceived, or by synthesis, in which unity and diversity are evident through experience. My judgment, "John is not red-haired," is based on my experience of John; but John is not by nature black-haired. He might have black hair, or red hair, or no hair, without suffering a change in his individual essence. But when I say "John cannot wish evil for himself," I proceed by analysis; for it is absolutely inconsistent with the nature of his free will to desire anything which his intellect does not recognize as some form of good. In each case the negation is valid; the judgment expresses a negative fact; but the negative expression is the peculiar act of the judgment, and does not exist as such in the reality represented.

Non-being, then, would seem to offer no great difficulty unless we drag the *modus* of intellectual operations into the order of reality. To this distinction of modes Scholasticism owes the coherence of its explanations.

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- ¹ Scholastics, of course, are not unanimous in their explanation of these theses. For a superb defense of the doctrine outlined here cf. *Révue Néo-Scholastique*, vol. xxxiv, 1932, "La structure métaphysique de l'être fini," pp. 187-217, by L. de Raeymaeker. For a full treatment of the same matter in the technical Scholastic fashion one could consult no better work than the same author's *Metaphysica Generalis*, Warny, Louvain, 1932, vol. i, pp. 90-184.
- ² de Raeymaeker, *Rév. Néo-Scol.*, loc. cit., p. 216.
- ³ For an explanation of the relation of the metaphysical constitution of being to the act of cognition cf. de Tonquédec, *La critique de la connaissance*, Beauchesne, Paris, 1929, pp. 163-178.
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The God of Aristotle and St. Thomas

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IN his *Hellenistic Philosophies*, Paul Elmer More characterizes Aristotle's conception of God as "an unwarranted assumption of the unchecked reason, logically self-destructive, and ethically mischievous."¹ Bitter words these to apply to "the master of them that know." Yet, though perhaps Mr. More's own statement might be taken by many as more of an unwarranted assumption than the Stagirite's conception of the Godhead, it contains nonetheless a deal of truth. The long list of heresies alone, ranging from the lowest depths of fatalism to the highest peak of mysticism, brewed from the concoction of Aristotle with Jewish, Arabian and Christian dogma, would seem sufficient confirmation of Mr. More's "intellectually confusing and ethically mischievous." Indeed, as Professor Ross remarks:

"It is little wonder that generation after generation of commentators have found it hard to believe that this is really Aristotle's view, and has tried to read something different into what he says. Even Alexander tried to find in his master some recognition of divine providence. . . . And Averroes, while denying to God any creative activity and freedom of will, ascribed to Him—and thought he was following Aristotle in doing so—a knowledge of the general laws of the universe. [Likewise] St. Thomas and Duns Scotus express themselves but cautiously . . . and our own time has witnessed a long controversy between Brentano and Zeller, the former maintaining, the latter denying the theistic interpretation."²

With such difficulties attending Aristotle's conception of the Deity, we are not surprised, at first glance, as Mr. More asserts elsewhere, that "heresy can be plucked with both hands out of Thomas Aquinas."³ But before passing judgment, let us for a moment follow Aristotle.

It is in Book XII of the *Metaphysics* that Aristotle formally treats of God, where he gives the name of theology to the highest of the sciences, the science of that being "upon whom heaven and nature depend." "Immovable in its pure activity, this being is in no way subject to change. Its life is such as the best which we enjoy, and enjoy but for a short time. For it is ever in this state, since its act is also pleasure,—the act of the supreme intelligence, pure thought thinking itself. . . . If God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are, this compels our wonder; and if in a better, this is yet more wonderful. Life also belongs to God: for the act of thought is life and God is that act; and God's essential act is life most good and eternal. We say, therefore, that God is a living being, eternal and perfect, so that life which endures everlastingly belongs to God, for God is this life."⁴ Moreover, this God is perfectly one, absolutely single.⁵

Thus does Aristotle with the neatest precision arrive at "the eternal something upon which heaven and nature depend," the object of his quest, the coping stone of

reality. It is with a certain awe that we rise with the pagan Stagirite up beyond the changing, perishable things of nature to the vision of the living, imperishable reality which knows no change—but it is an awe, unfortunately, that quickly terminates in a sense of incompleteness. For, when we have come upon the object of our quest, the answer to our problem, we are brought face to face with the stark reality of an isolated self-contemplating being who bears no relation to, and knows not the natures of his making. Absorbed in the thought of his own being, he stands aloof from contact with the rest of reality. Yet, though neither creator, nor author of providence, he is "the being upon whom heaven and nature depend." He is the author of our life and activity, yet he knows us not and hears not our prayers. Such is Aristotle's answer to the ultimate whence and how of moving, changing reality.

We shudder at the thought that such is the God of reason, so alien to our inmost convictions and so opposed to human tradition and belief. How could even Aristotle reconcile such a concept running counter to all experience with his own admission "that universal opinion is never without a certain truth?"⁶ Regardless, he proceeds without the least appeal to any human authority or religious presuppositions whatsoever. He recognizes no authority superior to reason. Trusting to it alone, he sets out on his venturesome task.

And herein marks a vital point in which Aristotle broke definitely with Plato, and Aquinas, in turn, with Aristotle. Though closely approaching each other in their views of the Godhead, they are complete strangers in their attitude towards religion. Like his master, Aristotle is strongly convinced of the unity of the Divine Being, of his transcendence above the world, of his purely spiritual nature and of his flawless perfection. But whereas Plato identified his God with the Idea of the Good, which can only be conceived of as impersonal, he describes, nevertheless, His creative and governing activity in conformity with the popular religion and not without varied mythical ornamentation. Aristotle on the contrary wards off any Platonic universalizing of the Godhead to the extent of inclosing Him in His own pure thought, and depriving Him of any operation on the world, save to set in motion the outer cosmic spheres.⁷ Consequently mundane events are not to be traced directly to divine causation. Zeus does not rain in order that the corn may grow, but because in accordance with the laws of nature vapors cool and descend as water.⁸ Prophetic dreams are not sent by the gods to reveal to us the future but are merely to be referred as natural effects to physical causes.⁹ Hence in Aristotle there is no room left for the direct agency of the Deity. God stands outside of the world engaged in the thought of His own Being. He is for man, along with all finite

ings, the goal to be striven for; but man can expect no reciprocal love from Him.¹⁰ To think anything other than Himself would be to lower Himself. And thus the affairs of mice and men are beyond the care and ken of Aristotle's God.¹¹

With these views Aristotle could not yield to the popular religion the same importance which Plato did. Plato's philosophy is inseparable from the myths of the popular religion.¹² For Aristotle the current fables and myths offer no scientific explanation of individual facts and events, and since his view is totally scientific, he immediately dismisses them.¹³ And the popular faith, whether referred to divine intuition or traced back to a hold-over of an older science or religion, can be true only if founded on human reason.¹⁴

With such enthronement of reason as the sole ruler of truth, he holds practically no regard for the religious consciousness which he finds around him. Hence the God of Aristotle in no way meets the demands of that consciousness. Plato, less scientific than his pupil, but building up on that consciousness, formulated his God accordingly. As a result we have juxtaposed in strong contrast the God of religion and the god of reason. To reconcile the two fell into the hands of posterity.

And such was the mighty task—the reconciliation of Reason and Dogma—that faced St. Thomas centuries later. Theologian as well as philosopher, he must draw from a twofold source: from Reason, in the rôle of philosopher, and as theologian, from Faith in the truths of Revelation. Accordingly, the establishment of the relation between Faith and Dogma, the blending of the two in a perfect harmony, was to constitute for the Saint his life's work. Inspired by Albert, and only too conscious of the double position taken by the Averroists: "As believers we affirm, as philosophers we deny," he set himself the unpleasant task of bringing into closer accord what to him, in appearance only, was incompatible.

At the start, then, he had to determine definitely on the rights and limits of both Faith and Reason; and attempt to crown each sovereign in its own realm. Neither one nor the other could be infringed upon in the least degree. Previously, such had been the case. Theology, to the exclusion of philosophy, had held supreme sway and dominion. A system of truths, such as Aristotle's, founded on reason alone, could expect nothing more than scornful contempt. The "*Fides quaerens intellectum*" was the keynote to the situation. Thomas, while convinced, like his contemporaries, of the truth of Faith, maintained, nevertheless, that Reason also has its truths, and must be cultivated in the nurture of its own methods and procedure. If Faith was to be adhered to, so must reason; and it was man's duty to extract the truth from one as much as from the other.

Nor was the solution of the problem to consist in superimposing theology on philosophy, or in the forcing of one down the throat of the other. Such was the strained union that Philo affected in his mixture of the Hebrew

Jehovah with the Pure Act of Aristotle. If Faith and Dogma were to be reconciled, it must be done without sacrificing one for the other. If both be true, they must flow naturally from the First Truth which is truth itself, and function as organic parts of a whole. If God, Who is the Source of all truth, be the same in nature and in Revelation, the truth of one cannot contradict the truth of the other without doing violence to the Author of truth. Rather, they must be complementary to each other; they must form together a complete synthesis of knowledge, embracing in its scope every science, be it human or divine, natural or supernatural.

Like Aristotle, whose principles were to form the basis of this synthesis, to St. Thomas "wisdom was more perfect and sublime, more useful and delightful than any other pursuit of mankind."¹⁵ But the wisdom of Aquinas was to have a much wider and deeper signification than the mere human wisdom of Aristotle. It was the wisdom of Faith completing the wisdom of reason—Faith enlightening the reason and quickening the will, and leading us on to the ultimate perfection of knowledge in the Beatific vision of God. Under the glow of this wisdom the Aristotelian world was to be transformed into a mighty synthesis of human and divine learning.

Taking the principles of Aristotle he forced them to their logical conclusions. Under the guidance of this higher wisdom he rejected what untrammelled reason had made inconsistent with these principles. And thus he rendered the philosophy of Aristotle more true to itself. And by adding the wealth of Christian tradition and restoring certain Platonic doctrines where the thought of Aristotle demanded it, he created an Aristotle more Aristotelian than ever. As Maritain points out, "Between Aristotle as viewed in himself and Aristotle viewed in the writings of St. Thomas is the difference which exists between a city seen by the flare of a torch-light procession and the same city bathed in the light of the morning sun."¹⁶

Nowhere were the traces of the master's touch to be seen more clearly than in the transformation of the Natural Theology of the Stagirite. If Aristotle had failed, guided only by his unchecked reason, St. Thomas was to succeed, with the wisdom of the centuries behind him and the infallible truths of Revelation to guide him. Into the barren concept of Aristotle he fitted the notions of creation, omniscience, and providence, truths which he knew from Faith were incontestable. And all this was to be done without the least damage to Aristotle's thought. Thus, he adopted the very principles of Aristotle, and by flogging his thought to keep it true to these principles—a point where Aristotle had failed—he forced it to its logical issues. And the result was that the God of Philosophy was no longer an isolated deity, wrapped up in self-contemplation, but the personal God of Abraham and Jacob, who "is nigh unto all them that call upon Him in truth."¹⁷

The first proof St. Thomas offers for the existence of God had its beginnings in Aristotle. It is taken from the

consideration of movement and rest on the principle that nothing is set in motion of itself. This proof is considered by St. Thomas to have the greatest evidential character of all the five proofs that he sets forth. The second proof is drawn from the notion of efficient cause. This proof also traces its origin to Aristotle. On the principle that it is impossible to regress *ad infinitum* in the series of efficient causes, he posits the existence of a first efficient cause whom we call God. The third proof of the "five ways" to demonstrate God's existence rests on the distinction between the Possible and the Necessary. The basis of the proof is that the Possible is contingent and does not contain within itself the reason for its own existence. Hence its existence is due to an efficient cause; and since there is no recourse *ad infinitum* in the line of efficient causes, we must come to a first efficient cause which was shown in the "second way" to be the being whom we call God. The fourth proof, again, as St. Thomas himself points out, goes back to Aristotle. Since there is observable in nature different degrees of perfection, such as more or less good, more or less true, etc., we deduce that whatever is highest of its kind is the cause of all that belongs to that kind, and this is that which we call God. Of the five proofs this is the weakest, and seems to bear the marks of the ontological proof. Hence many ascribe to it only probable value. The last proof and the most Christian in character, St. Thomas derived from St. John Damascene, though Christian theology from the earliest days had utilized it in some form or other. From the harmonized order of the universe, in which the whole and its parts tend to a definite end, there must exist a provident being, the cause and director of that tendency.

It is to be noticed that running all through these proofs is the dominant note of being. They all rest ultimately on the different functions of being. The being that changes and is moved requires the Being that is changeless and unmoved. The Immovable Mover is Being in its pure actuality with mixture of nothing else but being. Likewise, the being whose existence is not of itself but contingent, demands, in order that it exist, a necessary Being, that is, a Being whose existence is of itself, and cannot not be. In the same way a being that begins to exist, as a possible, since it cannot find the reason for its existence within itself, must owe its existence to a being that has never begun to exist, namely, a necessary Being. The same is true of limited and finite beings. They, too, must look to a being, unlimited and infinite; for what is limited does not contain within itself the source of its existence. Finally, being that is governed needs a being in no way dependent on anything else, but sufficient unto itself, on which all other beings depend.

As in the existence of God, so in the question of the nature of God, St. Thomas has always before his mind the idea of being. If God is being *a se*, whose essence is to exist, He is the Absolute Being, in which there is no mixture of potency or imperfection. He is pure actuality, pure existence. Hence He is perfect; for being *a se* has the

full plenitude of being and actuality, that is, the fullness of perfection. And as He is pure act, and since what is compound is constituted of act and potency, He contains no composition and must be simple, nor can He have any limitations in the line of being, for He is Being itself, and therefore infinite.

It is also under the light of this necessary being that St. Thomas deduces the act of creation. The same pure act to which Aristotle denied creative activity, St. Thomas shows, must of necessity, in consistency to itself, have created all other beings. Creation is the passage from non-being to being. Now contingent things have not the reason for their being in themselves and must of necessity have been created. Otherwise they would no longer be contingent but necessary beings. For there can only be one Necessary Being; because pure act means the fullness of being, perfect actuality. And hence if there were two such beings, one would not have the being of the other and consequently would not contain the fullness and perfection of being. It was by taking Aristotle's own concept of pure act and tracing it down to its logical conclusion, that St. Thomas, on purely philosophical grounds, arrived at a truth that Aristotle had missed.

By another master stroke, St. Thomas again showed from the act of creation that the pure act must conserve and govern everything that has been brought into being. The being that is created continues in existence in virtue of the creative act. For every effect depends on a cause so far as it is its cause. Now the Pure Act by creation is not only the author of the becoming of the thing that comes into being but of the very existence of that being, which exists only by participation in the existence imparted to it. Consequently that being would cease to exist should the Pure Act withdraw the existence imparted to it. And again St. Thomas in logical consistency to Aristotle's thought deduces the pertinent truths of providence and creation which found no place in Aristotle.

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- ⁶ Zeller, *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics*, translated by B. F. Costello and J. H. Muirhead, p. 256.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 388 sqq.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 361, n. 1.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 75 sqq.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 80 sqq.
- ¹¹ Such is Averroes' interpretation of *Metaphysics* xi.
- ¹² Vide *Timaeus*. Also More, *op. cit.* pp. 205 sqq.
- ¹³ Zeller, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 421.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 390, n. 3.
- ¹⁵ *Contra Gentiles*, I, c. 2.
- ¹⁶ Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 99.
- ¹⁷ Ps. cxliv, 18.

KANT'S ETHICS (Cont.)

must have an intellectual end; all other human ends are the cortege of this one. Now, intellection is an act, and an act has an object. The end of man, therefore, is the most perfect act, intellection, in regard to its most perfect object, the *optimum intelligibile*; the end of man is happiness in the contemplation of the divine.

But without much certainty about immortality or the hereafter, Aristotle's theory was partly wrecked by cold facts. Few can attain this end, and they only rarely, and when they do, a small cinder in the eye would spoil their joy. Happiness ought not to depend on anything in us except what is really moral. Yet here below it does depend on circumstances which we cannot always control. How have the wicked prospered!" says the Psalmist, and we are inclined to breathe the addition which was surely not far from the Psalmist's mind, "and how the good rot it in the neck." Aristotle could not get over this; he avoided the difficulty. Faced by the reality which contradicted his theory, he looked upon the contradiction as an accident.

St. Thomas salvaged the wreckage of Aristotle's theory and bolted it together again by his doctrine of merit. Merit is the bond between being good and being satisfied. Virtue and happiness do not always go hand in hand here, but hereafter. In this life the cleavage between virtue and happiness is accidental; in the next it will be shown that merit gripped the two together all the time. Here we are not always conscious of this; hereafter we shall be. Merit is a sort of journey to happiness. By merit morality leads to happiness, and right away, though not immediately. The medium from virtue to happiness is merit.

Thus St. Thomas satisfied the exigencies of all. The Epicurean says that the only good is virtue, and that the satisfaction of being virtuous is all we can hope for. The Hedonist insists, and it is hard not to agree with him, that this is rather thin; he demands that virtue be pleasure. Aristotle blinks the fact that happiness here below is accidental. Each is partly right and partly wrong. Partly wrong because only they can think that virtue is quite satisfying who have never tried it; only they can think that pleasure is the sole good who have never known any other; only they can rest satisfied with the disjoining of virtue from happiness who have no means to rivet the two together. Partly right, because virtue is a paramount good, if it leads somewhere (Kant did not see this); virtue must lead to a greater achievement than the psychologic satisfaction of having done one's duty (neither Kant nor the Stoics saw this); virtue does bring pleasure, though not immediately (Hedonists failed to see this); virtue and happiness are conjoined substantially hereafter (Aristotle did not realize this). And so, to Kant St. Thomas says, "the good does get you somewhere; to Aristotle, here and now, but surely hereafter; to the Stoics and Kant, the happiness to which virtue leads is much more than the thin psychologic satisfaction of feeling that one has

done one's duty; it will be the achievement of man's being; to the Hedonists, this achievement of your being brings with it the epiphenomenon of highest function operating on its most perfect object, eternal joy.

St. Thomas' success in marshalling once more these stray chunks of truth in dissentient philosophies, blocks which had wandered far from the synthesis to which they belong, depends, of course, upon the commanding position which he had already occupied in his epistemology; autonomy is linked with finality (1-2 Q. 19, art. 1. arg. 3 cum resp.). Kant pronounces a divorce between the two. Thomas examines carefully the reasons which an *impugnator vinculi* (Kant, *avant la lettre*) alleges for their separation. The reasons are these: an object of desire cannot be an object of moral rectitude, a moral object, because if there were morality in an object of desire, then anything desired would be, by that very fact, moral—which it is not. Hence the moral good of our choice is not related to objects of choice, but solely to the fact that the will is its own rule. With his usual firm suavity St. Thomas refuses to dissolve what nature has joined together. Just because good is the object of desire is no reason why it cannot be a moral object too. The only thing necessary that it should be both an object of desire and of rectitude is that the object of desire be put under the empire of reason. When put under reason's sway objects of desire can become moral objects as well. Good is what is desired, the object of appetite; moral good is what is desired under the regulation of reason, the object of rational appetite.

This is all that Kant demands: that the good be regulated by absolute law. But his first *Critique* made it impossible for him to trust reason beyond the limits of experience. And since experiential knowledge can, at most, erect only an hedonistic ethics—which Kant abhorred—he was forced to postulate that reason itself is absolute. Thus he secured obligation, law, the absolute; but obligation without content, law without definite prescriptions, an absolute which is perfectible. St. Thomas satisfies Kant's demand; reason is the way to the absolute; further, reason is *ours*, and therefore the law is autonomous; yet reason's content is dependent on external, absolute reality, and therefore law is partly heteronomous. Thus St. Thomas secures all that Kant secured and more, absolute law, autonomous law, but law rich with reality, God.

If one cares to depart from the *ad hominem* method, which has been employed here, and to argue directly for the validity of St. Thomas' synthesis of autonomy and finality, one must go back to the first *Critique*. The divorce between the two, autonomy and finality, is the source of Kantian ethics; their union is the source of Scholastic ethics. To show that autonomy and finality are linked is, therefore, the direct disproof of Kant's ethics; *hic standum est*. But that I have tried to do in the paper on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, where I showed that objectivity of thought is a condition for thinking at all.

BOOK REVIEWS

MORAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Papers Read at the Summer School of Catholic Studies
Held at Cambridge, 1932

Edited by Rev. G. J. MacGillivray, M. A.
New York: Sheed and Ward, 1933, \$2.00

The character of this book is sufficiently indicated in the subtitle, though there is a much closer unity in it than is usual in such collections of papers. That is due to the planning of the program to cover the fundamental principles of ethics and the application of these principles in the family, the state and in international relations.

Something different from what is found in the usual texts on ethics is the chapter on the supernatural virtues and their relations to the acquired habits which we call natural virtues. The chapter is more technical than would seem necessary and a bit unsatisfactory in point of definiteness in answering the questions brought up, and there must have been some slip in proof-reading on pages 132-133, for there the text becomes unintelligible. But some such chapter is really called for in a treatment of Christian ethics. For it is just a little curious that, while we all agree that ethics belong to practical philosophy and presumably therefore is intended to be directive of human activity towards the goal of life, the customary treatment of it is very much aloof from life. Now it is of course possible to treat ethics as a purely academic exercise in which we seek to work out the relations of a purely natural man to a supposedly purely natural end. In so doing, though, we can hardly hope to improve on Aristotle, and besides we could not form our lives on such an ethics. The purely natural man is a fiction (useful enough for some purposes), and the end of life is in fact supernatural. No doubt it is because we have our religion as a guide in living that we have not felt the practical need of any guidance from ethics as a part of philosophy. But that is scarcely a valid excuse for putting up with the unsatisfactory foundation of our ethics in a non-existent natural end of man.

The chapter on *The Right to Private Property* is very well done and should prove of great help in clear thinking on this subject which is of so much interest today. So, too, the chapter on *Marriage and Conjugal Duties* handles a difficult subject carefully and adequately. The chapter on *The Purpose and Authority of Civil Power* goes beyond the customary treatment to take up the consideration of the Totalitarian state as exemplified in Communism and Fascism. The treatment is necessarily brief, but enough is given to show the underlying philosophy of these new forms of social organization and the germs of possible conflict with Catholic thought contained in that philosophy.

JOHN F. MCCORMICK.

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

By David R. Major (Indiana University)

Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York, 1933, pp. 495, \$2.00.

The author states the purpose of his book in the preface: "This book undertakes to state simply and clearly some of the fundamental problems of philosophy, and to present in an elementary way the solutions of these problems that have been proposed by representative thinkers past and present."

The book is divided into sixteen chapters, nearly all of which treat of a different problem. The author puts broadly seven problems: the Ontological, Cosmological, Teleological, Theological, Epistemological, and Axiological problems, together with the problem of Mind. Other questions, such as Evolution, Origin of Life, Evil, Immortality, Freedom of Will, also come in for treatment. The introductory chapter states in detail the seven problems of philosophy. This, it is thought, gives the student a

working acquaintance with the new field on which he is entering. In the other chapters the method followed is simple: the problem is recalled in a few words, perhaps in the form of questions that challenge our every-day experience, or by giving the evolution of the vulgar idea about the matter. Then the solutions are proposed. The author does not often quote from the philosophers whose systems he is expounding. He prefers to present the solution in his own words—a way much more understandable to beginners. For one entering on the field of philosophy cannot be expected to chew and digest such authors as Kant and Berkeley immediately: they have their own individual terminology. Select bibliographies are put at the end of each chapter, and a general classified bibliography at the end of the book. As nearly as possible related subjects are treated in successive chapters.

Throughout the book one finds that the author opposes the views of "common sense" to those of a "reputable group of thinkers." Herein one finds the chief defect of the book—its failure to mention the solution of Scholasticism for the various problems, the solution that champions common sense. One is surprised to meet with a book that purports to be up-to-date, and yet makes no mention of a large body of philosophical doctrine which exists side-by-side in the world today with the other doctrines mentioned in the book. For Scholasticism declares that it has a solution to our problems which vindicates common sense and gives a man an opportunity to believe once more in his fundamental sanity. What can be the excuse for slighting such thinkers as Jacques Maritain, Père Maréchal, Martin D'Arcy, Etienne Gilson? Is the work that goes on at the Institut Catholique de la Philosophie at Paris, at the Academy of Medieval Studies at Toronto, the University of Louvain, and other centers of neo-Scholasticism to go unnoticed in a work that presumes to give us the solutions of representative thinkers?

Again, the work has one large historical defect: it fails to give us (except in a brief paragraph) the doctrine of the Medieval Schoolmen. I find no excuse for leaping the ages from Aristotle to Descartes with only a word about the philosophy that flourished in the interval. To quote Louis J. A. Mercier of Harvard (*The Challenge of Humanism*): "Here we come to one of the most mystifying turns in the history of thought . . . the great Scholastic synthesis which perfected the philosophy of Aristotle, itself the undoubted summary of the best thought of antiquity, is, at least in the English-speaking world and outside of Catholic centers, practically unknown, or is at best considered, even in representative philosophical centers, as an inconsequential doctrine that need not be inquired into or that may be dismissed with contumely on the basis of some sentence or other culled from its decadence." Professor Major in omitting to give Scholasticism a place in his book has deprived his readers of a treasure.

JAMES J. DOYLE.

SOCRATES

By A. E. Taylor

D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1933, \$2.00

This little book is another feather in Mr. Taylor's already well-decorated cap. It successfully attempts the difficult task of presenting, in a style at once popular and critical, the essentials of the information we possess about Socrates. When we consider that our knowledge of Socrates is so poor in facts and so rich in obscurities, Mr. Taylor has done exceptionally well in keeping his book free of useless and highly colored speculation.

The book is divided into four parts: the introduction, which treats of the sources and of Mr. Taylor's standards of criticism

dealing with them; and three chapters concerned with the early life of Socrates, his later life and death, and his place in the history of European thought. The final chapter is the *l'ère de résistance*. Mr. Taylor dwells on the fact that Socrates' chief contribution to our philosophical heritage is the concept of the immortal soul as the principle of life and action, whose intellectual and moral perfection is man's supreme care. The two intermediate chapters succeed admirably in giving an historical perspective of Socrates in the civilization of which he was a part—its philosophy, its politics, its religion—and apart from which he cannot be understood.

The student of philosophy will find a number of passages where he will be forced to pause and suspend his judgment. Mr. Taylor adopts as his standard of criticism the theory held by himself and Professor Burnet, that there is no real distinction between the Platonic Socrates and the historical Socrates. Now there is no difficulty in admitting that the character of Socrates, his cast of mind, his education, his ideas in general, are represented quite accurately by Plato; we may admit, too, that the dialogues, in the type of subject matter and the method of treatment, are truly Socratic; we may even say that a great part of the doctrine was implicitly that of Socrates. But it is *non sequitur* to say that any one of the dialogues, or any portion of them, are mere reports, or that all the doctrine except that of the last half-dozen is actually Socratic.

If we had any assurance that the dialogues were written and published as faithful historical pictures of Socrates and his teachings, all would be quite simple; but in the absence of such evidence, it seems more reasonable, both from internal and external considerations, to accept them as intended to be dialectical treatments of philosophical questions, conducted in the spirit of Socrates, and as extending the application of his principles, not as merely retailing them. The difficulty of the change of speaker in the late dialogues is easily explained by assuming that, while Socrates could well be the vehicle for Plato's non-Socratic doctrine, he could not justly enunciate teachings which were non-Socratic—a subtle distinction, perhaps, but one which is, I believe, justified.

The *Phaedo* is the crux of the question. If this dialogue is intended to be an accurate historical report, then the great theory of Ideas of Plato's mature period, and many other characteristically Platonic doctrines must be ascribed to Socrates. Now we have no reason to say that the *Phaedo* signifies anything else but that Socrates, on the day of his death, did talk with his associates about the immortality of the soul. That Plato should use this as a *mise en scène* for an original discussion of that question does not make the *Phaedo* a "gigantic and unpardonable mystification," any more than if we were to find in a magazine a discussion of the League of Nations couched in the form of a lively dialogue between Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau. We should allow the writer free play for his originality, as long as he did not put definitely un-Wilsonian opinions in Wilson's own mouth.

Perhaps I am reading a great deal more into Mr. Taylor's words than I should; nevertheless, his stand on the historicity of the *Phaedo* and the value of Aristotle's testimony is bound to lead to these difficulties, and to others which we have no space to consider here. The ordinary reader of Plato will feel that if the *Phaedo* is a mere transcript, any or all of the others may be. In fact, such problems loom up on every side once one begins to toy with the idea that Plato is a historian. The other view is that offered by the dialogues themselves, and held the common view almost since the days of their composition, namely, that the dialogues of Plato are essays in philosophy, and not in the history of philosophy.

JOHN L. MCKENZIE.

